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The Lincoln *e*Letter



Blanche Lincoln – U.S. Senator for Arkansas

Taking the Pulse of Rural Health Care

Dear Fellow Arkansan,

This week, I began my two-week, five-stop tour across Arkansas to "take the pulse" of health care in our rural communities.

Monday I met with about 150 Arkansans in Clinton and heard about the challenges they face and their ideas to improve health care. Dr. Terry Sutterfield, Medical Director of Boston Mountain Rural Health Center, discussed the difficulties of health care access in Van Buren County, where 26 percent of the residents are uninsured and many are on Medicare or Medicaid. He also touched upon the difficulties rural Arkansas faces in recruiting and retaining health professionals. Mr. Kirk Reamey, CEO of Ozark Health Medical Center, discussed the hospital's outreach to the community and involvement in programs that keep teens healthy and drug free.

A local pharmacist raised his concerns with the burden of paperwork, regulations, and fees required by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) for pharmacists to supply medical equipment and supplies. A nurse practitioner talked about ways to fill gaps in our primary care workforce. Other Arkansans stressed the need to address the preventive health needs in our state, like smoking cessation and prevention of obesity and related health conditions.

I was grateful to hear from these Arkansans, and I plan to take what I've heard back to Washington. From my seat on the Senate Finance Committee, I'll give Arkansans a voice in the debate on upcoming health care reform.

Next week, I'll continue my statewide tour with stops in Augusta, Lake Village, Nashville, and Springdale. I hope you'll join me and I hope to hear from all Arkansans about your solutions to the health care crisis.

For more information on my CALL TO ACTION: Taking the Pulse of Rural Health Care tour, visit my website at www.lincoln.senate.gov.

With Arkansas Pride, Blanche

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U.S. Senator Blanche Lincoln speaks to patients, providers, and other health care professionals Monday during a stop in Clinton on her CALL TO ACTION: Taking the Pulse of Rural Health Care tour.



U.S. Senator Blanche Lincoln meets with residents of Helena-West Helena Sunday during the official opening of a new outdoor walking track at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS) Delta Area Health Education Center (AHEC). The track was named for Lincoln, a Helena native.

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U.S. Senator Blanche Lincoln meets with Darrion Coleman of Parkview High School Monday during a meeting of the Political Animals Club in Little Rock. Lincoln presented Coleman with a \$3,000 scholarship from the Political Animals.



U.S. Senator Blanche Lincoln and Mena native Shannon Morgan attend a press conference held last week in Washington. Morgan served in Iraq as a part of the "Lioness" soldiers attached to all-male combat units for the purpose of defusing tensions with Iraqi women and children. Lincoln and Morgan are joined by other members of the Lioness team.



U.S. Senator Blanche Lincoln recently received the CHRISTUS Eagle Award from John Selig of Hot Springs. Lincoln received the award for her strong commitment to improving the delivery and accessibility of quality health care.

News For Arkansas

<u>Senate Budget Includes Lincoln Proposals for Arkansas's Small</u> <u>Businesses, National Guard and Reserve, and Families</u>

Lincoln Fights for Arkansans' Gun Rights

<u>Congressional Delegation Announces \$116 Million Now Available to</u> Local School Districts



Lincoln on YouTube: How Can Volunteerism Help Get Our Country Back On Track? Join the conversation at

www.youtube.com/senatehub

I encourage all Arkansans to join my conversation on YouTube about volunteerism and what it means to our state and nation. I believe that volunteerism is a critical component of tackling our nation's challenges, making us stronger, and helping us appreciate all that we have. I look forward to hearing from you.

http://lincoln.senate.gov

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